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The Messiah's Name: JESUS, Not Yahshua

Daniel L. Segraves

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The Messiah's Name: Jesus, Not Yahshua

by Daniel L. Segraves

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An organization that calls itself "Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly" propagates an erroneous teaching concerning the name of the Messiah. This teaching is explained in a booklet titled *The Mistaken J: True Names of the Father and Son* and the tract "How the Savior's Name Was Changed."

The material produced by this organization reveals that the anonymous author or authors do not know the rudiments of the Hebrew language. They also deny the inspiration of the Greek New Testament. Their faulty case is built on misuse of the Hebrew language, a denial of the inspired Greek text, and a refusal to accept the legitimate development of the English language.

The printed materials of the YNCA are riddled with errors. We will summarize those assertions which seem to be keys to their claims and respond to them.

The Savior's Name

The YNCA asserts that it is an "inescapable fact that the Savior's name is not Jesus, and never was."[1] Actually, "Jesus" is simply the transliteration into modern English of the Greek *Iesous*. The English "Jesus" has precisely the same meaning as the Greek *Iesous*, which was the inspired transliteration into Greek of the Hebrew *Yeshua'*. As *Iesous* is transliterated into other languages of the world today, it is pronounced differently than in English, for each transliteration follows the rules of the

language into which a word is transliterated. Since some languages do not have sounds present in other languages, transliterations inevitably produce variations in pronunciation. For example, there is no equivalent in English to the final letter of the Messiah's name in Hebrew. This letter, ayin, is virtually unpronounceable by English speaking people. Many Hebrew-speaking people in the world today cannot pronounce it correctly. The correct pronunciation is a guttural produced by constricting the lower throat muscles and retracting the tongue root. Some Hebrew grammarians describe it as the sound of "incipient vomiting."

Contrary to the YNCA's claim that it is an "inescapable fact that the Savior's name is not Jesus," the fact that is inescapable is that the Messiah's name is not and never has been "Yahshua." "Yahshua" is an invented spelling which does not exist in any Hebrew manuscript or literature anywhere in the world. It violates the rules of the Hebrew language and reveals that those who promote its use do not know biblical Hebrew.

The Name of the Father

After having summarily dismissed the legitimacy of the Messiah's name in modern English, the YNCA declares that "the Name of the Heavenly Father is not Jehovah."[2] This is apparently intended to lend legitimacy to the previous rejection of the pronunciation "Jesus."

But there is no relationship between the pronunciation of the English transliteration of *Iesous* and the original Hebrew pronunciation of the Tetragram, *YHWH*. There is no scholar who claims that the original pronunciation of the Hebrew *YHWH* was "Jehovah." The name by which God revealed Himself to Moses (Exodus 6:3) is the third person singular form of the Hebrew *hayah*, which is the closest the Hebrew language has to the verb "to be." Thus, *YHWH* means something like "He is." When He identified Himself to Moses as "I AM" (Exodus 3:14), He used the first person singular form of *hayah* (*eheyeh*).

Most Hebrew scholars agree that the original pronunciation of the Tetragram was probably something like "Yahweh."[3] The spelling "Jehovah" for the Tetragram entered into English translations of the Bible through the influence of William Tyndale's sixteenth century translation. This does not mean that Tyndale or anyone else at that time pronounced "Jehovah" as in modern English; they did not. The sound of the modern "J" had not yet developed in the English language. Tyndale simply transliterated the Tetragram into English, including the vowel markings supplied by the Masoretic scribes of the sixth century A.D. When the Masoretes developed a system of dots and dashes to represent the traditional pronunciation of vowel sounds in the Hebrew Scriptures, they inserted the vowels for *Adonai*, a Hebrew word meaning "Lord" or "Master," into the consonants of *YHWH*. Origi-

nally, the Hebrew language had no vowels. The vowel sounds were preserved by tradition, as the Scriptures were read orally. About the time of the Babylonian exile, the Jewish people stopped pronouncing *YHWH* to avoid taking God's name in vain (even though this is denied by YNCA). Instead, when they came to *YHWH*, they would say "Adonai." The Masoretes inserted the vowels for *Adonai* into *YHWH* to indicate that the reader should say "Adonai," not to suggest that *YHWH* should be pronounced with the vowels from *Adonai* and certainly not, as claimed by YNCA, to prevent the reader from "blurting out ... Yah."[4] It is true that the original pronunciation of God's name in the Hebrew Scriptures was not the modern English "Jehovah," but it is equally true that the name of the Messiah is not "Yahshua" in any language.

Was the Savior's Name Pronounced "Jesus" in the First Century?

YNCA claims that "most continue believing that the *Hebrew* Savior is called by a *Latinized Greek* name that could not possibly have existed at the time He walked the earth. It's a name that would have been completely foreign to Him."[5] On the contrary, it is very doubtful if most people in today's world believe that the modern English pronunciation of "Jesus" was actually used to identify the Messiah in first century Israel. Most reasonable people understand that modern English is not

ancient Greek, Aramaic or Hebrew, and they instinctively know that the pronunciation of the Messiah's name depends entirely on the language one speaks. The name that we pronounce in modern English as "Jesus" certainly did exist at the time the Messiah walked on the earth, but it was of course pronounced according to the language of the speaker at the time. Since Jesus spoke Aramaic (e.g., Mark 5:41; 7:34) and was a Galilean, He probably pronounced His own name as "Yesu." Those who spoke Aramaic in the southern part of Israel would have pronounced it "Yeshu," but the Jewish people from the northern part of the land typically could not pronounce the "sh" sound. (See Judges 12:5-6.) This should not be surprising; many Jewish people in Israel today cannot pronounce the ayin. Since all of Jesus' apostles except Judas were from Galilee, Judas was probably the only one to pronounce His name "Yeshu."

Ernest Renan is quoted by YNCA as acknowledging that "the Savior was never in His lifetime called 'Jesus.'"[6] If the doctrines of YNCA were not so dangerous, the appeal to Renan's acknowledgement would almost be humorous. Of course the Savior was never called "Jesus" in His lifetime; the English language did not exist at that time! This is like saying that the center of Jewish worship in Jerusalem was never called the "temple" during the first century, and that therefore we should not call it the temple either. Renan is further appealed to with his "doubts that the Savior even spoke Greek."[7] Although

we know that the conversational language used by Jesus was Aramaic (His untranslated words are in Aramaic in the gospels), Renan's claim that the Savior did not speak Greek is questionable. Greek was the official language of the Roman Empire. All of the coins used in Israel during the first century were stamped with Greek words. At least one synagogue of the era has been discovered by archaeologists to have Greek inscriptions. When certain Greeks asked Philip to see Jesus, there is no indication Philip could not understand their request or that Jesus would have been unable to talk with them (John 12:20-22). When Jesus stood before Pilate--who certainly did not speak Aramaic--there is no indication that they needed an interpreter to converse. Jesus frequently quoted from the Greek Septuagint. (For more evidence that Jesus spoke Greek, see the discussion under "The Inspired Greek New Testament is Denied.")

False Claims for "Modern Scholarship"

Perhaps the greatest falsehood propagated by YNCA is the blatantly false claim that "modern scholarship recognizes 'Yahshua' as the best rendition for the name of the Savior."[8] Modern scholarship recognizes no such thing. No Hebrew scholar in the world recognizes the spelling or pronunciation "Yahshua" as being legitimate. It is extremely significant that YNCA does not offer the identity of even one scholar to support this claim; no such support can be found.

"Yahshua" is Not a Name

Then comes the assertion that "the Father's and Son's revealed, personal Names are the foundation on which other vital, salvation truths rest."[9] YNCA's foundation is shaky indeed; it consists of a "name" which has never existed in any language.

Developing Languages

YNCA declares that "any substitute name employing the letter J is erroneous on its face."[10] The booklet then proceeds to quote from a number of dictionaries and encyclopedias to trace the historical development of the letter "J." But the bottom line is this: YNCA rejects the legitimate development of the English language, apparently wishing to lock English into a pre-seventeenth century form. But why should we stop with this? Perhaps we should return to the English of Chaucer or to the proto-English Gothic of the fourth century.

What the YNCA apparently forgets is that all languages, including Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, are developing languages. Static languages die. We have no way of knowing today with absolute certainty how any Hebrew word in the Old Testament was originally pronounced, including *YHWH*. For example, I studied the Hebrew language in graduate school under two professors, one of whom spoke and taught Hebrew according

to the ancient Masoretic pronunciation, and the other of whom spoke and taught the language according to modern pronunciation. Even the professor who prefers to preserve the Masoretic pronunciation recognized that the Masoretes did not necessarily represent the original pronunciation in every case. If any pronunciation of the Messiah's name employing the modern "J" sound is erroneous, why isn't the YNCA's pronunciation, which ignores the final letter ayin, erroneous? Indeed, if in order to be saved we must pronounce a name as it was originally pronounced thousands of years ago, we are all hopelessly lost, for no one can be certain about original pronunciations.

YNCA declares that the "Savior's name could not begin with the letter J because it did not exist when He was born."[11] Since many speakers of modern English do not concern themselves with the development of alphabets, this may seem to be a startling revelation so shocking that any reasonable person would immediately reject the name "Jesus." But, in the face of the claim that the Savior's name could not begin with the letter J, thinking people will stop to ask why every legitimate Bible translation into the English language has the Messiah's name as "Jesus," and why English-speaking scholars around the world continue to use that name. Is there really, as YNCA seems to suggest, some kind of evil conspiracy to keep people from knowing the true name of the Messiah? What could possibly be the motive for such a con-

spiracy? How could all of the scholars and translators in the world be kept in line to propagate such an erroneous lie?

As we have already pointed out, every scholar in the world agrees that the Messiah's name was not pronounced with an initial "J" sound in the first century. The reason for this is quite simple: Neither Jesus nor anyone else at that time spoke modern English! The YNCA position declares that we must reject our own language and return to the Hebrew language, but it then offers an invented name for the Messiah which bears less connection to His actual name than the modern English pronunciation!

The Sound of Yod

The claim that the Hebrew yod "carries the sound of 'ee' as in 'police'"[12] further reveals the author's lack of familiarity with the Hebrew language. Yod is transliterated into English as "y," and it has no vowel sound of its own at all. The author may be confused about the development of matres lectionis during the monarchic period of Israel's history. "In the earliest phase of the development of Hebrew, vowels were not indicated at all."[13] But during the monarchic period, the alphabetic signs he, yod and waw "were introduced at the end of words to indicate final long vowels."[14] When he, yod and waw are used to indicate final long vowels, they are no longer

considered consonants.[15] In this case, the letters have taken on a different function altogether. In the third stage of the development of the Hebrew spelling system, the matres lectionis ("mothers of reading" in which consonants took on the new function of indicating vowel sounds), yod and waw began to be used not only at the ending of a word to indicate a vowel, but also within a word. But yod never represents vowel sounds at the beginning of a word, and he represents a vowel sound only at the ending of words.[16]

The statement that yod "in Hebrew carries the sound of 'ee' as in 'police'" is simply wrong. If the yod is at the end of a word, it indicates the "ee" sound. If it is within a word, it may or may not indicate the "ee" sound. If it is at the beginning of a word, it never indicates the "ee" sound. The context of the claim made by the author of *The Mistaken J* indicates he thinks yod has the sound of "ee" when used as the first letter in a name. This is wrong.

The YNCA points out that "the first copies of the 1611 King James Bible did not use the letter J" and that "no evidence is found to show that the letter I had the consonantal sound of J."[17] Of course the original KJV did not use "J," and of course the initial "I" did not have the sound of "J." The letter and its sound had not yet been assimilated into the English language. But if we must return to pre-1630 English to pronounce the name of the Messiah, why shouldn't we return to pre-monarchic

Hebrew? If the goal is to pronounce the Messiah's name as it was pronounced in ancient Hebrew, we must bypass even the Aramaic of Jesus' time and the Hebrew of David's time. Thus, we would be obliged to pronounce the name as "Yehoshua'" (Numbers 13:16), including the final ayin, which is virtually unpronounceable for English-speaking people. It should be noted that the "o" in "Yehoshua'" is a long "o." To pronounce it with the sound of a short "o" is incorrect. In addition, we cannot be certain about the original pronunciation of the final "a" sound, the patach. If we pronounce it as did the ancient Masoretes, it will have the sound of "a" in "am." If we pronounce it as in modern Hebrew, it will have the sound of "a" in "father." The final "a" sound in "Yehoshua'" is a furtive patach, a non-syllabic glide element which is not considered a vowel; its presence is strictly limited to assisting in the pronunciation of a final guttural, like ayin.[18] As "Yehoshua'" is pronounced by modern English-speaking people, however, this furtive patach has become the final sound. If the claim is made that we must pronounce the Messiah's name as it was originally pronounced, "Yehoshua'" is as incorrect as "Jesus." The YNCA pronunciation "Yahshua" is a nonexistent, invented word. No matter how it is pronounced, it never was the Messiah's name.

The author of *The Mistaken J* alleges that "after development of the letter J, the Savior's Name was changed by the translators to Jesus, but continued to be pronounced

much like the letter Y. However, the pronunciation of the J soon changed completely from its former 'yee' sound to our present 'juh' through French influence."[19] Actually, the spelling "Jesus" instead of the original King James "Iesvs" was not the work of translators but of typesetters. When the English language developed to the point that the initial "I" was written with a tail, as "J," this change was incorporated into the King James Version. To quibble about this is largely a matter of quibbling about type styles. In the 1611 edition of the King James Version, Matthew 1:21 reads: "And fhe fhal bring forthe a fonne, and thou fhalt call his name IESVS: for he fhal faue his people from their finnes." A number of letters in this verse are now pronounced differently than they were in 1611. Must we reject modern English? The YNCA is in error when it claims that "the pronunciation of the J soon changed completely from its former 'yee' sound to our present 'juh'." The initial "I," which was later written as "J," never had the "yee" sound. It was the transliteration of the Greek iota, which has the sound of "ee" as in "feet" when it is long, and the sound of "i" as in "pit" when it is short. The "y" sound is missing from the Greek language in which the inspired New Testament was written.

What Language Did Mary and Joseph Speak?

Three errors are included in the YNCA claim that "the name the angel gave to Hebrew-speaking Mary and Joseph was *Yahshua*, meaning 'Salvation of Yah.'"[20] The

first error is the claim that Mary and Joseph spoke Hebrew. From the time of the Babylonian exile in 586 B.C. through the first century A.D., Hebrew was no longer the dominant language among the Jewish people. It was replaced by Aramaic, which was the language Jesus spoke.[21] During this time, Hebrew was a language in use only by the learned scholars. It is doubtful that we could place Mary, a teenage girl, and Joseph, a carpenter from Nazareth, in this company. Young Jewish girls in the first century were not exposed to an educational system designed to teach them the Hebrew language. The second error is the claim that the name given to Joseph and Mary was *Yahshua*. It is devastating to the YNCA claim that by page 7 of the booklet *The Mistaken J*, the author has not been able to quote from a single scholar to support his conclusion that the Messiah's name was originally "Yahshua." The spelling "Yahshua" is invented; it does not exist anywhere in the Hebrew Scriptures or in any scholarly work on this subject anywhere in the world. The third error is the claim that "Yahshua" means "Salvation of Yah." "Yahshua" does not mean anything, for it is not a word. The only place this invented word will be found is in materials by organizations like YNCA and the Sacred Name Broadcaster, and all of this material is written by people who apparently do not know the Hebrew language.[22] To get the meaning "Salvation of Yah" requires the Hebrew words *Yeshu'at Yhwh*, as in Exodus 14:13.

The YNCA References Disprove Its Position

Next YNCA devotes three pages to quotations from references which prove that the name "Jesus" (Greek, *Iesous*) is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew *Yehoshua'* or its shortened form, *Yeshua'*.[23] This helps the YNCA case not at all. Quotations like these could have filled the entire booklet, for all scholars agree on this point. It is devastating to the YNCA case that the author was unable to provide even one scholar who recognizes the spelling "Yahshua."

In the midst of his quotations from various references which prove that the modern English "Jesus" comes from the Greek *Iesous*, which in turn comes from the Hebrew *Yeshua'*, the YNCA author declares, "Thus we see that the Savior's name as well as the descriptive title 'Messiah' have been undermined and appear in Greek in changed form. Our Savior has been stripped of His Israelite roots."[24] This claim is completely untrue. To the YNCA author, to transliterate is to "undermine" and "change." Actually, to transliterate is to preserve the pronunciation of words as closely as possible from one language to another. When the receptor language does not have precise sound equivalents of the original language, there will be some change in pronunciation, but the transliterated word is still the same word.

The Inspired Greek New Testament is Denied

On page 11 of *The Mistaken J*, the author begins a discussion of his theory that the original language of the New Testament was not Greek. This view is essential to the claims of YNCA. If the New Testament was originally written in Greek, the YNCA claims about the Messiah's original name come crashing down. In fact, the New Testament certainly was originally written in Greek. There is absolutely no evidence to the contrary. Every ancient manuscript of the New Testament--and they date back to the second century and perhaps even to the late first century--is in Greek. There is simply no manuscript evidence in existence to indicate that the New Testament was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic. The first translation was into Syriac (Aramaic), but this was not done until 150 A.D.

It should be kept clear in one's mind that the YNCA position requires us to reject the New Testament in favor of mythical documents which do not exist and never have. Over 5,300 Greek manuscripts testify to the name *Iesous*; not one can be produced to witness to any other name for the Messiah.

A few scholars have theorized that Matthew was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, but no scholar suggests that the entire New Testament was written in anything other than Greek. Even those scholars who suggest that Matthew may have originally been written in

Hebrew or Aramaic cheerfully admit they cannot produce any actual evidence that this is so. The theory that Matthew may have originally been written in Hebrew comes from a comment by Eusebius, the fourth century church historian, concerning a statement by Papias, the meaning of which is debated by scholars. It is by no means certain that Papias meant that Matthew wrote in the Hebrew language.[25] He may simply have meant that Matthew employed Hebraisms, or Hebrew figures of speech. But regardless of what Papias meant, not one manuscript has ever been found to support this theory. The biggest percentage of the content of the New Testament was written by a Gentile physician, Luke, to another Gentile, Theophilus. Paul's letters included Gentile audiences who would not have known Hebrew or Aramaic. In addition to the manuscript evidence itself, the style of the New Testament, including its grammar, idioms and vocabulary requires that the original language was Greek. YNCA closes its eyes to all the evidence to insist that the original New Testament was not written in Greek, and that the Messiah's name was a word which has never existed until it was coined by the author of the Sacred Name Broadcaster and borrowed by YNCA. The dangerous thing about this is that it is a rejection of the work of the Holy Spirit in inspiring the original authors of the New Testament to write in the Greek language.

In his attempt to demonstrate that the New Testament was not originally written in Greek, the author declares

that after 135 C.E.[26], the "Roman army destroyed anything Jewish, especially religious scrolls and books, including their Torah."[27] This claim is essential to the YNCA position, for the absence of even one Hebrew manuscript of the New Testament must be explained. The author alleges, "Hebrew copies of both Old and New Testament writings were lost. Only Greek copies survived. No 'original' Hebrew or Greek New Testaments are known to have survived. Neither are there any original Hebrew Old Testaments [sic] manuscripts, only copies of copies of copies."[28] These claims are completely misinformed and wrong. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls provides a rich resource of ancient Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament dating to 100 years before the time of Christ. The 1940s discovery of Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament in archeological digs on Masada added to the number of manuscripts predating the Messiah. These manuscripts are virtually identical in every way, even to the spacing between sections of Scripture, to Hebrew manuscripts still being copied by hand in approved Jewish institutions today! By 135 A.D., thousands of copies of the New Testament manuscripts were in existence, scattered all over the Roman Empire. The first New Testament book, James, was written to the twelve tribes scattered abroad in about 48 A.D. Eighty-seven years after its origin, we may be sure the Book of James was copied and recopied many times, with the number of copies growing exponentially. Galatians was

written in about 49 A.D. The probability that the Roman army, or anyone else, could have found and destroyed every copy of every New Testament book scattered all over the Roman Empire is zero. People of faith have not been known throughout human history for their willingness to cooperate with evil schemes of human government. Any attempt to stamp out the Scriptures has always met with creative resourcefulness on the part of believers who find ways to preserve the Scriptures by hiding them from those in authority.

The YNCA author admits that no "original" Hebrew manuscripts of the New Testament "are known to have survived." This is about the closest he comes to the truth on this subject. Reasonable people will see that the YNCA position demands that the lack of evidence is proof that something happened!

The YNCA author claims that "an increasing number of competent Bible scholars now agree ... that the New Testament in whole or part was first written in Hebrew and only later translated into Greek."[29] He then invites the reader to "write ... for a list of renowned Bible scholars who uphold an original Hebrew New Testament."[30] It would be interesting to know why he did not go ahead and include the list of "renowned Bible scholars" in *The Mistaken J.* The truth is that the number of competent Bible scholars who theorize (remember, there is no evidence) that Matthew was originally in Hebrew is decreasing, not increasing. The reason for this is the

complete lack of evidence. For a list of those who do think Matthew may have originally been written in Hebrew, one need not write YNCA. This information is available in any reputable introduction to the New Testament.

An article by David Bivin in *The Washington Times* is appealed to in support of the theory that "the original account of Yahshua's life was written in Hebrew."[31] This is not the same thing as saying that Matthew or any of the other authors of the gospels originally wrote in Hebrew. Some scholars have theorized that the gospels took their information from an original document called "Q" or from a document in the Hebrew language preserving the sayings and deeds of Jesus, but such documents have never been found. What the YNCA author does not mention is that David Bivin affirms that the Messiah's name in the Hebrew language was Yeshua', not YNCA's "Yahshua."[32]

The appeal to Martin Luther flies in the face of YNCA's claims. Luther testified that "the New Testament is written in Greek."[33] Of course it contains many Hebraisms. A Hebraism is simply a figure of speech in the Hebrew language. Even though the Jewish authors of much of the New Testament wrote in Greek, their Hebrew thought forms are preserved. This is not denied by any scholar, but it does nothing to prove YNCA's claims.

In the tract "Was the New Testament Originally

Greek?," the YNCA author alleges that "a number of competent scholars ... contend that the New Testament was first written in Hebrew (or Aramaic ...."[34] The first "competent scholar" to which the author appeals is E.W. Bullinger, who straightway denies the YNCA claim when he writes, "The writers were Hebrews; and thus, while the language is Greek, the thoughts and idioms are Hebrew ... If the Greek of the New Testament be regarded as an inspired translation from Hebrew or Aramaic originals, most of the various readings would be accounted for and understood."[35] It is not clear from this quote whether Bullinger, a scholar of a century ago, believed the New Testament was actually originally inspired in Hebrew. There have been some, although the number has decreased dramatically, who believed that Matthew or perhaps other limited portions of the New Testament were originally written in Hebrew. But whatever Bullinger may have believed on this matter, it is clear from the quote that he also believed that the Greek New Testament had the status of inspiration. This is devastating for the YNCA position, for the Greek New Testament everywhere identifies the Messiah as *Iesous*, not as "Yahshua." And the Greek New Testament nowhere uses the Hebrew Tetragram; it everywhere identifies the God of Israel by the Greek *Kyrios* or *Theos*. According to YNCA, these words are reprehensible when applied to Israel's God. But if Bullinger's view is to be embraced, these Greek words must be accepted.

The second "competent scholar" to which the YNCA appeals for proof that the New Testament was not originally written in Greek is George Lamsa, who has no academic credibility in any scholarly community. John P. Juedes, in the article "George M. Lamsa: Christian Scholar or Cultic Torchbearer?," thoroughly documented Lamsa's theological aberrations and false academic claims.[36] A summary of Lamsa's heretical views follows:

- ☐He embraced Nestorianism, the view that Jesus is actually two persons.
- ☐He denied that Jesus claimed to be equal with God, or that He wanted to be worshipped.
- ☐He denied that Jesus physically rose from the dead.
- ☐He spiritualized the ascension.
- ☐He did not believe that the Second Coming would be a physical event. He taught that it would be a "spiritual" coming that would transpire in the world's consciousness.
- ☐He attempted to unite the world religions by eliminating the uniqueness of Jesus and His atoning sacrifice.
- ☐He did not believe Jesus died to atone for our sins.
- ☐He denied the existence of a personal devil and demons.

☐He claimed he was the only person on earth able to accurately interpret the Bible.

George Lamsa denied that any portion of the New Testament was originally written in Greek and claimed that the "original Aramaic" was not translated into Greek until after A.D. 318. He claimed that the Greek translators were "deceitful and ignorant, intentionally adding and deleting passages and wrongly translating many parts."[37] He also falsely claimed that the Greeks occupied Palestine for only seven years, rather than for the 270 years of actual history.

The YNCA author claims that "Peter and the others ... hardly would be expected to write their epistles in a second language, but would logically write in Hebrew, their native tongue."[38]

We have already documented the fact that Hebrew was spoken only in the scholarly communities of first century Israel. In addition, archaeology proves the widespread use of the Greek language in first century Israel. A study of 168 inscriptions in Palestine found 114 of them to be exclusively in Greek. Greek is found in Jewish ossuaries (stone chests holding the bones of the dead) and on a synagogue. These findings indicate that Greek was a common language among the Jews. Israel is a land-bridge through which key trade routes pass, and a knowledge of the Greek language was required to do business with the traders.

Additional evidence for widespread knowledge of the Greek language among the Jews of first century Israel is the fact that more than half of the quotations from the Old Testament found in the New Testament are not from the Hebrew Scriptures but from the Greek Septuagint. Even Matthew quotes primarily from the Septuagint and uses 76 words found nowhere but in the Septuagint. The vocabulary and style of the Septuagint characterizes the New Testament. Some common "Jewish" words, like "synagogue," "sanhedrin," and "hypocrite" are not Hebrew at all, but Greek.

Even though Jesus spoke Aramaic as His conversational language, that He and His disciples knew Greek is evident from the fact that they were from "Galilee of the Gentiles" and that He used Capernaum, a Greek city, as His headquarters. Matthew, a tax collector, and Peter and John, fishermen, would have had to know Greek to do their business. In Acts 6:1, it is clear that many of the Jews in the early church were Greek-speaking: they are known as "Hellenists."[39]

Contrary to the YNCA claim that "a number of competent scholars ... contend that the New Testament was first written in Hebrew," "scholars universally agree that the New Testament was written in Greek.[40] Even the YNCA publication gives mute evidence that this is true. After appealing to Bullinger and Lamsa, no further "competent scholar" is mentioned as contending for an original Hebrew New Testament!

Carson, Moo and Morris offer three pertinent reasons as to why Matthew could not have originally been written in Hebrew.

- Substantial linguistic evidence is against those who claim that Matthew was originally Hebrew or Aramaic. The quotations from the Old Testament do not reflect a single text form. Some are Septuagintal; others come from a Semitic original; still others defy classification. The mixture of text forms indicates the author was writing in Greek but that he was knowledgeable in Semitic languages.
- The detailed verbal connections between Matthew and Mark make it extremely unlikely that Matthew was first written in Aramaic.
- The Greek text of Matthew does not read like translation Greek.[41]

Throughout the pamphlet "Was the New Testament Originally Greek?," the author inserts the invented "Yahshua" into the text of various New Testament verses, like Acts 4:13. It should be kept constantly in mind that there is not one New Testament manuscript extant, anywhere in the world, containing "Yahshua" or even "Yahweh." The YNCA author is both adding to and taking away from inspired Scripture.

After insisting on an original Hebrew New Testament,

the YNCA author makes an amazing claim: "Greek is a very exact language, a prime reason that Yahweh has preserved both the Old and New Testaments in the Greek."[42] This undermines every claim made by YNCA. Apparently, from the YNCA view, Yahweh did not care to preserve the "original Hebrew" New Testament. He supposedly allowed it to be completely destroyed and to pass out of existence, even though it was original and even though the supposedly sacred name "Yahshua" was lost with it! If the Greek "translation" of the Hebrew "original" of the New Testament is so faulty--as YNCA alleges--why did Yahweh preserve it?

On the other hand, Greek is indeed a very exact and precise language; that is why we must accept the name *Iesous* as the legitimate, God-given name of the Messiah. It appears everywhere in the Greek text.

The YNCA's dearth of resources is revealed in a lengthy appeal to Shlomo Pines, an Islamic author.[43] It should be obvious that when recourse must be made to Islamic sources rather than legitimate Biblical and Christian scholarship, something is amiss. Lamsa would no doubt have been happy with this appeal to an Islamic source, for he was of the opinion that Judaism, Islam and Christianity should be able to coexist and denounced as "ignorant" those who claim that these three religions are incompatible.[44] Even the YNCA author seems somewhat tentative when he writes, "If we can rely upon Pines' work ...."[45] Indeed, we cannot. The questions in view

here must be resolved within the framework of biblical scholarship.

The YNCA author reiterates that neither the Greek nor the Hebrew languages have the sound of the modern English "J." This is intended to convince the reader that the name of the Messiah simply cannot be pronounced in modern English. Then the author asserts, "Let us not forget that we read from a Hebrew Bible. It is the account of Yahweh's dealing with His people Israel. Yahweh spoke to a peoples [sic] who understood Hebrew."[46] It is true that the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, addressed to Israel, and that they understood Hebrew. But the New Testament was written to a primarily Gentile church which had no knowledge of the Hebrew language. Much of the New Testament, 28% (Luke and Acts), was written by a Gentile, Luke, to a Gentile, Theophilus.

We must reject the YNCA claim of an original Hebrew New Testament which contained "Yahweh" and "Yahshua." There is absolutely no evidence for this, and there is abundant evidence to the contrary.

Questionable Sources

The YNCA prints an excerpt from the *Emphatic Diaglott*, which is popular with the Jehovah's Witnesses but not held in high esteem among scholars. It is apparently from the *Emphatic Diaglott* that YNCA came up

with the spelling "Yahshua." It should be noted that even the Diaglott does not suggest this spelling. Rather, it affirms that the name Jesus "is composed of YAH ... and SHUA."[47] This does not mean, as YNCA seems to think, that YAH and SHUA are to be glued together to form "Yahshua." According to the rules of Hebrew grammar, when the name of God, *YHWH*, is joined with the Hebrew word for salvation (*yasha'*), the resultant spelling is "Yeshua'." It is also apparently from the Diaglott that YNCA gets the idea that the name of the Messiah means "salvation of YAH." The Diaglott appeals to Eusebius for this meaning. But it should be remembered that Eusebius wrote some four centuries after the time of the New Testament. He was an historian, not a linguist. The fact is that Yeshua' means "Yahweh will save." This is affirmed even in inspired Scripture, which quotes the angel as telling Joseph, "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21, NKJV). The reason the Messiah was to be named "Jesus" is because He *was* Yahweh, who came in the flesh to save His people. This is apparently denied by YNCA, which seems to suggest that "Yahweh and His Son Yahshua" are to be distinguished, not identified.[48]

On pages 12-13, the author appeals to several references to explain the meaning of the Messiah's name. The references do nothing to prove the YNCA teaching. Not one of them recognizes the spelling "Yahshua." It is interesting to note that the author quotes not only from

legitimate scholars, but also from *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*. This is the work of the Jehovah's Witnesses, and it is completely without credibility in the scholarly community. There is every reason to believe that those who did this work for the Jehovah's Witnesses, like the author of the YNCA materials, were not proficient in Hebrew. All of the false teachings of these groups would cease immediately if those responsible for them would simply enroll in a course in elementary Hebrew in any college, university, or seminary.

"Yahshua," An Invented Non-Word

On page 13, YNCA attempts to justify the spelling "Yahshua" as the name of the Messiah. Again, the explanation reveals a lack of knowledge of the Hebrew language. It is true that YAH is the abbreviation for Yahweh. It is also true that *shua'* comes from the Hebrew *yasha'*, which means salvation. But this is where accuracy ends in the YNCA explanation. It is not true that to obtain the Hebrew form of the Messiah's name we simply glue YAH together with *shua'*. The shortened form YAH is the independent form and/or the terminal form in some names like Elijah. Though it can stand alone or at the end of a word, it cannot stand at the beginning. It is also not true that "Yahshua" means "the salvation of Yah." The author falsely implies that name "Yahshua" appears in Exo-

dus 15:2.[49] Actually, a literal translation of the verse would be "My strength and my song is Yah, and He has become my salvation." Here is the transliterated Hebrew text of this portion of the verse: "'azziy wezimrat yah wayehiy-liy liyshu'ah." YNCA plucks "yah" from one part of the sentence and "shu'ah" from another, puts them together, and comes up with the invented "Yahshua." But when Yahweh and *yasha'* (the Hebrew word for "salvation") are united according to the legitimate rules of Hebrew grammar, the result is not "Yahshua," but "Yehoshua'" or the shortened form "Yeshua'." These are the only forms which appear in the Hebrew Scriptures; "Yahshua" appears nowhere.

Numbers 13:16 records the changing of Joshua's name by Moses. The name of Moses' successor was originally *Hoshea'*, the Hiphil infinitive form of *yasha'*, which means "salvation." Moses changed this name to *Yehoshua'*, which means something like "Yahweh is Salvation" or "Yahweh will save." During the exilic period, *Yehoshua'* was shortened to *Yeshua'* (e.g., Ezra 3:2). *Iesous* is the direct transliteration into Greek from *Yeshua'*.

The YNCA author may think that by spelling the Messiah's name "Yahshua," he is returning to the original spelling, but that is not correct. Not only is he changing a vowel (from an "e" class to an "a" class), but he is also adding a consonant (he). The consonant he adds ("h") is not the original he as in *Yehoshua'*. If he wishes

to reinsert the original he and go back to the pre-exilic spelling, he must pronounce it as *Yehoshua'*. He seems to think that he is restoring an original spelling by adding "Yah" to "shua," but this never appears anywhere in the inspired Hebrew Scriptures. When Moses changed Joshua's name, he did not add "Yah" to *Hoshea'*, which would have resulted in the doubling of the he, but would have been an incorrect form. Instead, he simply placed a yod before *Hoshea'*, which is the briefest abbreviation for Yahweh in the Scriptures, and which necessitated a change in the vowel pattern of the name. When the spelling was later abbreviated into *Yeshua'*, it was the initial consonant and vowel of the original *Hoshea'*, the Hiphil infinitive form, which was dropped. This has nothing to do with the name of Yahweh; it is simply a verbal form of a word. The initial yod, which represented the name of Yahweh, was retained. This necessitated the lengthening of the initial vowel sound from the shewa after yod in *Yehoshua'* to the tsere after the yod in *Yeshua'*.

The abbreviation *YAH* for Yahweh is an independent or terminal form. It always appears either alone or at the end of some names, like Elijah. It also appears in its terminal form in "Hallelujah." It never appears at the beginning of a word as an abbreviation for Yahweh.

"Jesus," the Modern English Transliteration of "Yeshua'"

YNCA claims that "Jesus" is "an etymological hybrid from Greek and Latin" and "has no inherent, etymological meaning in Greek or Latin."[50] This is an untrue, misleading statement. "Jesus" is simply the direct transliteration into modern English of the Greek *Iesous*, which appears nearly 1,000 times in the inspired Greek of the New Testament, and which means "Yahweh will save." YNCA's problem is very simple: It cannot accept the fact that languages develop and change. If YNCA believes that the Messiah's name must be pronounced as it was in ancient Hebrew, they should pronounce it that way themselves, including the final ayin, and they should stop promoting the non-existent pronunciation "Yahshua." As long as they mispronounce the name even in Hebrew, it is difficult to understand their motivation in fighting against the modern English "Jesus."

The YNCA author asks, "Would a celestial being announce the coming Savior to Jews who spoke Hebrew (or Aramaic), proclaiming a Romanized, Grecian name beginning with a letter J that did not even exist ...? Remember it was to Israel, a Semitic people who spoke and understood Hebrew, that His saving Name was first revealed."[51] Here is another crack in the YNCA teaching. Suddenly, the author confesses that if first century Jews did not speak Hebrew, they at least spoke Aramaic. But

Hebrew and Aramaic are two different languages, though modern Hebrew uses the alphabet of Aramaic "square script." The truth is that the common language among first century Jews in Israel was Aramaic, not Hebrew. And whatever the angel said to Joseph and Mary, the Holy Spirit later inspired every New Testament writer to declare the Messiah's name to be *Iesous*, which transliterates into modern English as "Jesus." To reject *Iesous* is to reject the inspiration of the New Testament.

The Root of the Error

In an attempt to explain the origin of the spelling "Yahshua," the author claims that when "writing Yahweh's name in the Hebrew, Jewish scribes inserted a *shewa*" instead of *qamets*, "thus changing the vowel sound 'ah' in 'Yah' to 'eh.' This was done to conceal the sacred Name, thus yielding the improper Yehovah and Yeshua."[52] This statement is wrong and misleading. The vowels inserted into the Tetragram in the Masoretic text were those belonging to the Hebrew *'adonay* or *'Adonai*. There was no attempt on the part of the Masoretes to suggest that the Tetragram should be pronounced with an initial "yeh" sound. Instead, the vowels were to signal the tradition of saying "Adonai" when coming to the Tetragram. This was a practice which began during the Babylonian captivity. The shewa beneath the initial yod is simply the equivalent of the hateph-

patach beneath the initial aleph of *Adonai*. Aleph is a guttural, and gutturals never take the simple vocal shewa; they take the hatephs, or composite shewas.[53] Contrary to the YNCA claim, the reason such groups as Jews for Jesus today contend that "Y'shua" is the Jewish way to say "Jesus" is not to avoid offending Jews, but because they know the Hebrew language and thus know that "Y'shua" is the genuine Hebrew pronunciation.

Like many Hebrew words, Yeshua' is a sentence. It means something like "He will save." To change the spelling to "Yahshua" is as wrong as it would be to change the spelling of the English translation, "He will save," into "Hah woll siva." When a vowel is changed and a consonant added, as is done by YNCA, the "word" no longer means "He will save." Indeed, the "word" has no meaning at all when transliterated back into Hebrew.

The author quotes *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* which disproves his own thesis: "*Iesous* is the Greek form of the Old Testament Jewish name Yesua, arrived at by transcribing the Hebrew and adding an s to the nom. to facilitate declension."[54] Here is a scholarly source which declares *Iesous* to be the transliteration of *Yesua*. The fact that the YNCA author inserts "Yahshua" in brackets after *Yesua* does not help his case at all, but weakens it. He is unable to provide even one scholarly source to support his claim, so he must force his spelling on legitimate scholarly references.

The Use of the Septuagint in the New Testament

A complete misunderstanding of the role of the Septuagint in the New Testament is revealed in the statement, "The early Christian translators relied upon the Greek translation called the Septuagint as their source of the Hebrew Scriptures."[55] It was not "Christian translators" who quoted from the Septuagint, but the original authors themselves. Even Jesus quoted from the Septuagint! This could be demonstrated time and again, but for the sake of illustration it should be noted that if Jesus quoted from the Hebrew text rather than from the Septuagint in Matthew 15:8-9, the force of His statement against the Pharisees would have been lost.

It should be noted that in spite of the YNCA claims that "Yahweh has preserved both the Old and New Testaments in the Greek,"[56] they really believe that our present New Testament is corrupted by the presence of hundreds of "mistranslations" from the Septuagint. Every claim made by YNCA about "errors" in the Greek text is actually a rejection of the inspired Scripture itself.

A "Scribe" Tampering with the KJV?

With no warrant at all, the author declares, "Clearly, some over-zealous scribe tampered with the text of the King James Bible and what we have is a New Testament

in which the Name of Yahshua has been adulterated and almost obscured."[57] As examples of this "tampering," Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8 are offered. In both cases, Joshua, Moses' successor, is identified by the Greek equivalent of his Hebrew name. Then, the amazing claim is made that "this shows how the translators overzealously changed all the 'Yashua's' to 'Jesus.'"[58] This is not true. The name of Moses' successor was never "Yahshua." This is a non-word which means nothing when transliterated back into Hebrew. The name of Moses' successor, transliterated from Hebrew to English, is Yeshua'. When transliterated from Hebrew into Greek, Yeshua' becomes Iesous. Even the scholars abundantly quoted by YNCA declare this to be true. All that is proven by Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8 on this matter is that "Jesus" is the legitimate transliteration into modern English of the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew Yeshua'.

The YNCA author claims he is "correcting" the name of Moses' successor and the Messiah "with the 'Yah.'"[59] As we have seen previously, this is no correction at all, but the creation of a word which does not exist in the Hebrew language. All that would be required for the YNCA teaching to enter into legitimate academic discussion is for them to produce even one Hebrew manuscript, of the Old or New Testaments, or one Hebrew scholar, who recognizes the spelling "Yahshua." In all their writings, they are unable to produce even one. Surely we are not to believe that the God of Israel is so

weak or so unconcerned that He was incapable of preserving the "true name" of the Messiah in any manuscript on the face of the earth until the "Yahshua" spelling was invented in the late twentieth century.

The Jehovah's Witness Connection

It is problematic for the YNCA position that they quote from the Jehovah's Witness works *Let Your Name Be Sanctified* and *The New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*.[60] Neither have any credibility with legitimate scholars. Like the YNCA, the Jehovah's Witness publications ride roughshod over the facts and ignore scholarship in an effort to prove preconceived doctrines.

The Rejection of "God" and "Lord"

Not only does the author of the YNCA materials reject the legitimate Yeshua' and the inspiration of the Greek New Testament; he also rejects the words "God" and "Lord" when applied to the true God.[61] This is in spite of the fact that the inspired Greek Scriptures use *theos* ("God") and *kyrios* ("Lord") abundantly in reference to the true God. The YNCA unsuccessfully tries to make "Lord" and "God" refer exclusively to false gods.

The author seems to recognize that the Hebrew *ba'al* means "lord," but he does not seem to understand that

biblical words, like all other words in all languages, are defined by their contexts. Many false teachings originate from an attempt to lock a narrow range of meaning into a biblical word and to insist that it always means the same thing in every context. But many words have a wide range of meaning, and only the context can determine what a word means in any specific instance. Dictionaries do not define words; they only list possible meanings in a variety of contexts. The Hebrew *ba'al* is used in a wide range of contexts to mean "master," "husband," "dominion," "lord," "captain," "burden," to "marry," and many more things. The YNCA claim that the true God of Israel cannot be legitimately called "Lord" because *ba'al* means "lord" is the fact that in the inspired Hebrew Scriptures themselves, the true God of Israel is identified as Israel's *ba'al*! In Isaiah 54:5, the prophet declares, "For your Maker is your husband [Hebrew, *ba'al*], the LORD of hosts is His name." Also in Jeremiah 31:32, the God of Israel says, "I was a husband [Hebrew, *ba'al*] to them, says the LORD." It is true that in many contexts Baal refers to heathen deities, but it is also true that in many other contexts it refers to the husbands of women, to masters of servants, to military captains, and even to the relationship of the true God of Israel to His people! The word *ba'al* is transliterated "Beulah" in one very positive context (Isaiah 62:4) where it means "married." Even the YNCA admits that *ba'al* means "lord." Thus, the claim that Israel's God can never be called

"Lord" falls flat. Of course, another devastating problem for YNCA is that the inspired Greek New Testament uses *kyrios*, which means "lord," abundantly for the true God.

The YNCA attempt to make the word "god" the same as "gad" is completely without basis in fact. The truth is that the Greek *theos* means "god," and it is used throughout the Greek New Testament, in the Septuagint, and even in quotations by Jesus Himself (John 10:34-35).

Eclectic Theology

The author of the YNCA materials seems to have been influenced by Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witness and perhaps even Mormon theology. The statement, "You could say 'Yah' is the family Name of the Heavenly Majesty"[62] seems to suggest the view that God is a family. It seems certain from reading the material that YNCA distinguishes sharply between the persons of "Yahweh" and "Yahshua."

Self Contradiction

Throughout the material, the YNCA author quotes material from various sources which continually contradict the YNCA teaching. For example, Marvin Wilson is quoted as writing, "Jesus was given the Hebrew name Yeshua."[63] This does not help the YNCA position; it contradicts it. Yeshua is not "Yahshua."

"Yahweh" in the New Testament?

It is alleged that Yahweh "should have appeared 100 times in the New Testament."[64] This is completely untrue. Yahweh never appears and never appeared in any New Testament manuscript, for the New Testament was originally written in Greek, not Hebrew or Aramaic, and Yahweh is a Hebrew word. When the inspired Greek New Testament quotes a Hebrew Scripture containing Yahweh, the Greek uses *kyrios*, meaning "Lord."

Changing the Name?

Then the author claims that "the majority of Bible versions have changed the holy Name to the titles God and Lord."[65] Again, this is not true. Every Bible translation in English will explain in the preface its practice when it comes to the divine name. There is nothing "hidden" or "changed." There is no conspiracy. Many Bible translations, in keeping with the Jewish practice of saying *Adonai* ("Lord") in place of Yahweh will use LORD, in large and small capital letters, to represent Yahweh. This, and other conventions, tells the reader precisely what Hebrew word is behind the English. If the English reader wishes to go ahead and pronounce the word as it is in Hebrew, that is his privilege.

"Jesus" Without Meaning?

The YNCA author declares that "Jesus" is not Greek or Hebrew and that "it is completely without philological meaning in any language."[66] As the abundant quotes in the YNCA material itself proves, this is not true. YNCA simply cannot accept the fact that it is possible to transliterate the Greek *Iesous* into modern English or any other language of the world. What is true is that "Yahshua" is not Hebrew, and it is completely without philological meaning. The author repeatedly makes claims like, "Scholars acknowledge that the name given through Gabriel was the Hebrew Yahshua." But the YNCA material never quotes one scholar to support this claim; indeed, they cannot, for no Hebrew scholar in the world would make this claim. The suggestion is made to "see any good study Bible with marginal notes on Matt. 1:21 and Luke 1:31."[67] No legitimate study Bible in existence suggests the spelling "Yahshua" in the marginal notes on Matthew 1:21 or Luke 1:31 or anywhere else. Then, the author declares that "Yahshua" means "Yahweh is salvation."[68] Earlier, he claimed that "Yahshua" means "Salvation of Yah." The meanings are not the same, but "Yahshua" means neither. "Yahshua" is a non-word which, when transliterated back into Hebrew, means nothing. It may appear to those uninitiated into Hebrew that "Yahshua" is close enough to "Yeshua" to mean the same thing, but when vowels and consonants in words

are changed, new words, or even nonsense "words," are formed. To say that "Yahshua" and "Yeshua'" have the same meaning would be like saying that my name, "Daniel," which means "God is my judge," would mean the same thing spelled "Denial." Words are made up of consonants and vowels. Changing consonants and/or vowels destroys the original word.

Does God Speak Only Hebrew?

Then the amazing claim is made that "whenever a message was given from on high, it was to those who understood Hebrew, which is called by some the 'heavenly language.'"[69] But at the earliest, Hebrew began to be spoken around 1500-1400 B.C.[70] The claim of YNCA would mean that God spoke to no one prior to 1500 B.C., which is patently false. The absurdity of this is also seen in such instances as the angel of God speaking to Cornelius in Acts 10. Cornelius no doubt spoke both Italian (Acts 10:1) and Greek, the common language of the Roman empire, but to claim that this Roman military man spoke the language of a few Hebrew scholars of the day is beyond belief. The fact is that whenever God has spoken to people, He has spoken to them in a language they could understand, whatever that may have been. God knows all languages.

An Error Repeated

An earlier error in the booklet is repeated on page 21: "Yothe carries the sound of i as in machine." This is not true. When the yod is the first letter in a word, it has the sound of the English "y." It has no vowel sound of its own at all. If the yod appears within a word, it may serve as a matres lectionis, in which case it will be preceded by the hireq. It also serves a vowel sound at the end of a word, again preceded by the hireq. But when it is initial, as in YHWH and Yeshua', it does not carry the "ee" sound.

Strong's and Kittle's

The YNCA author quotes from *Strong's Concordance* and *Kittle's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* to support his claim that the Savior's name was "Yahshua." Neither supports his claim. Both recognize, however, the legitimate Yeshua'. The spelling "Yahshua" does not appear anywhere in Strong's or Kittle's.

A Crude Attempt to Transliterate?

One can be thankful that at least the YNCA author does not endorse the completely erroneous claim that "Jesus" is derived from "Zeus."[71] Instead, the author suggests that "it is more likely that 'Jesus' resulted from

a crude attempt to transliterate ... from Hebrew to Greek to Latin and then to English."[72] Actually, there is nothing crude about the transliteration. *Iesous* is the legitimate and only possible transliteration into Greek of the Hebrew *Yeshua'*. "Jesus" is the legitimate transliteration of *Iesous* into modern English.

George Howard's Theory

The writings of George Howard are often quoted by the Jehovah's Witnesses and others who wish to minimize the importance of the name of Jesus. I have read Howard's material, and I have discussed his theories with him personally. In the final analysis, he theorizes that because some copies of the Greek Septuagint contain the Tetragram in Aramaic or early Hebrew letters, or transliterated into Greek letters, the original Greek manuscripts of the New Testament may have also had the Tetragram in places where the authors quoted from Hebrew Scriptures which contained YHWH. That is the extent of his theory, and he cheerfully admits it is a theory, for there is no manuscript evidence at all to prove that this is so. There is nothing here to help the YNCA teaching. It has nothing to do with the name of the Messiah.

Hebrew More Authoritative Than Greek?

It is clear that the YNCA author does not believe the

Greek text of the New Testament is equally authoritative with the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.[73] If the Greek is inspired equally with the Hebrew, the entire structure of YNCA teaching collapses. As we have noted previously, it is clear that the New Testament was originally written in Greek.

Flawed Claims

The discussion of the origins of the words "God" and "Lord" by the YNCA author is flawed. When radical claims like those made in the YNCA materials are put forth, it is always wise never to take anything for granted, but to carefully check all original sources for oneself. YNCA focuses on possible negative connotations of a possible root for "god," but Webster, for instance, declares that "God" derives from the Persian *goda*, which has the idea of "possessor" or "princeps" or "dominus." Thus, Webster asserts that "God" has to do with supremacy and power, from a root signifying "to press or exert force."[74] There is nothing negative about this. We have already discussed the fact that the Hebrew *ba'al* means, among other things, "lord," and that it is used in a wide variety of contexts in the Hebrew Scriptures, including in reference to the God of Israel Himself! It is as illegitimate to equate "gad" with "god" as it would be to say that "can" and "con" have the same meaning. As we mentioned earlier, words consist of consonants and vow-

els. When changes are made in these letters, the word is no longer the same word. At best, it may be a different word; at worst, it may be no word at all.

Is Pronunciation a Requirement for Salvation?

In response to those who argue that the YNCA teaching means that persons with a lisp could not be saved since they cannot pronounce the Messiah's name correctly, the YNCA author replies, "Rest assured that He Who has created man's tongue would not give us a Name we cannot pronounce!"[75] Yet even those who adhere to YNCA teachings do not pronounce the Hebrew Yeshua' correctly. First, they misspell it with "Yahshua." Secondly, it is doubtful if they correctly pronounce the final ayin.

Changing the Scriptures

Again on page 29, the YNCA author inserts "Yahweh" into a New Testament verse where it never has appeared (I John 5:3). This is done again on page 37, where "Yahweh" is inserted into John 4:24, and on page 40, where "Yahweh" is inserted into Luke 4:4, and on page 45, where "Yahweh" is inserted into Revelation 13:6 and 16:9, and on page 46, where "Son of God" is made to be "Son of Yahweh" in John 3:16. On page 47, "Yahshua" is inserted into Acts 9:15.

The YNCA author declares that "the title of the Bible book following Deuteronomy properly should be 'Yahshua,' not Joshua. It is the same Hebrew name as our Savior Yahshua."[76] Thus, we must not only reject the inspiration of the Greek New Testament according to YNCA teaching, but we must also reject the idea of an inspired, inerrant Hebrew Old Testament. The logical end result of the YNCA teaching, if followed to its final extreme, would be to reject all Scripture in favor of YNCA's mythical reconstruction.

A Verse Misinterpreted

In answer to the question, "Why do we not find Yahweh's and Yahshua's name in our Bibles," the author declares, "The Bible lays the blame at the feet of scribes and translators."[77] Then, in a favorite verse of those who insist that all biblical texts are corrupt, Jeremiah 8:8 is quoted. This verse says nothing, of course, about "Yahshua," and it has nothing to do with why YHWH is not transliterated into English translations. What the verse means is simply that, just as there were false prophets who claimed to speak in the name of the Lord, so there were scribes who falsely claimed to be writing the word of the Lord.

Four Consonants or Four Vowels?

Concerning the fact that the Tetragram is composed of four Hebrew consonants, YNCA makes the same error as others who reject the name "Jesus." "Yahweh preserved His Name with three of the four letters that in the Hebrew ARE used as vowels as well as consonants ... three of these vowel-letters form the Tetragrammaton or Yahweh's Name ... Josephus writes about the sacred Name ... 'it consists of FOUR VOWELS.'"[78]

Here again the author's ignorance of the Hebrew language is revealed. Although it has been true since the monarchic period in Israel that the alphabetic signs yod, he, and waw could serve as markers for long vowels, yod can never serve as a vowel marker at the beginning of a word, and he can serve as a vowel marker only at the end of a word. The Greek word translated "vowels" in Josephus is from the Greek *phone*, which simply has to do with a "sound." It could be that Josephus was referring to the four Greek vowels sometimes used to represent the Tetragram. But we may be certain that the Tetragram consists of four consonants. Moses wrote long before the time of Israel's kings; he wrote the name as YHWH before the development of the use of any of the letters as vowels. Indeed, the YNCA author himself quotes the *Encyclopedia Britannica* which indicates that the Tetragrammaton contains "four consonants."[79] It is interesting that on page 32 the YNCA author would de-

clare that "one of the most common misconceptions about the sacred Name is that its four letters are consonants," and then on page 33 quote a scholarly source which directly refutes the YNCA claim. Self-contradiction is typical throughout the YNCA material.

The Transliteration of Names

In response to the protest of an English-speaker that "Yahweh" is Hebrew, the YNCA author claims that "names simply don't change from language to language."[80] As an example, it is claimed that in English news reports "Boris Yeltsin is still called 'Boris Yeltsin.'"[81] This is incorrect. Names *do* change from language to language, and "Boris Yeltsin" itself is an example of that. "Boris Yeltsin" is the English transliteration of a name consisting of letters of the Russian alphabet. If "Boris Yeltsin" were not transliterated, we could not read the name. And the correlation of the sound of this name in English to its sound in the Russian language depends completely on whether the Russian and English languages have precise sound equivalents. The differences in sound between *Yeshua'* and *Iesous* are due entirely to the fact that the Greek alphabet does not have the "y" sound of the Hebrew yod or the "sh" sound of the Hebrew shin. In addition, the Greek language commonly placed a final sigma in the nominative form of masculine names. But we should keep in mind that the

Holy Spirit inspired the New Testament writers to record the Messiah's name as they did. If the Holy Spirit declared *Iesous* to be the Messiah's name in the Greek language, all of the protests offered by YNCA collapse.

Every year at Christian Life College, many students come from a variety of nations of the world. If the language of their homeland is not English, their names must be transliterated into English. Frankly, after these students have been in college for four years, I am still unable to pronounce some of their names precisely according to the original language! To say that the pronunciation of names does not change from one language to another is simply wrong.

Hebrew in the Garden of Eden?

On page 42, the YNCA author makes the claim that Adam and Eve spoke Hebrew, and that the Hebrew language was not affected by the confusion of languages at Babel. There's not a Hebrew scholar in the world who believes this. There is absolutely no evidence for it. The earliest written examples of ancient Hebrew (remember that our current Hebrew letters are from the Aramaic; they are not the same as the ancient letters) are found on the famous Moabite stone which dates from the ninth century B.C. and on the inscription discovered in the Pool of Siloam from about the eighth century B.C.[82] If ancient Hebrew was spoken in the Garden of Eden, it

seems strange that archeology has uncovered no example of it in writing until less than 1,000 years before the time of Christ. The claim that the tribes of Shem did not join the project at the plains of Shinar contradicts the plain statement of Genesis 11:1 that "the whole earth had one language and one speech." We don't know what language was spoken prior to the Tower of Babel, but Hebrew was one of the Semitic languages resulting from the confusion of tongues, which is why--though it is a distinct language--it has much in common with the other Semitic languages.

Conclusion

The claims of YNCA must be rejected. They are completely erroneous and reflect faulty scholarship and ignorance of the Hebrew language. They make the pronunciation of the Messiah's name as "Yahshua," a non-word, a requirement for salvation for those who have heard the teaching.[83]

The name of the Messiah can conscientiously be pronounced by any person anywhere in the world according to the rules of his own language. Those who wish to pronounce it as in the Hebrew language can say "Yeshua'," but even then they may not be precisely correct, for few can correctly pronounce the final ayin.

Paul charged Timothy to remind early Christians "not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hear-

ers" (II Timothy 2:14, NKJV). This is precisely the error of the YNCA. Believers should focus their attention on the Lord Himself, then on the inspired Hebrew and Greek texts of Scripture, and not be distracted by false, uninformed claims about mythical manuscripts no one has ever seen or will see.

For two thousand years, people have been saved as they called on the name of the Messiah as it was transliterated into their own languages, and for hundreds of years, salvation has come to those who called on the name of Jesus in faith. Not only that, but demons have fled, sicknesses have been healed, and various signs and wonders have been worked--all in the name of Jesus.

One error tends to lead to another, and it would not be surprising to see those who hold YNCA doctrines eventually embrace the Law of Moses as binding on Christians, reject the identity of Jesus with Yahweh, and adopt the polytheistic view of God as a family.

Notes

[1]*The Mistaken J: True Names of the Father and Son* (Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1996), 1.
[2]Ibid.
[3]See, for example, R. Laird Harris, ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980), 210.
[4]"How the Savior's Name Was Changed" (Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1990), 6.
[5]*Mistaken J*, 1.
[6]Ibid.
[7]Ibid.
[8]Ibid.
[9]Ibid.
[10]Ibid., 2.
[11]Ibid.
[12]Ibid., 6.
[13]C.L. Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1987), 8.
[14]Ibid.
[15]Ibid.
[16]Ibid., 9.
[17]*The Mistaken J*, 6.
[18]Seow, 13.
[19]*The Mistaken J*, 7.
[20]Ibid., 7.

[21]Menahem Mansoor, *Biblical Hebrew Step by Step*, Vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), 8-10.
[22]Appendix 2 includes a discussion of the *exeGesis Bible*, which erroneously indicates that the Messiah's Hebrew name was YAH SHUA.
[23]*The Mistaken J*, 7-10.
[24]Ibid., 9.
[25]See D.A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 67-71 and William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 83-91.
[26]It is interesting that the author rejects A.D. (in the year of the Lord), as do the Jehovah's Witnesses, in favor of C.E. (common era), the designation used by those who wish to reject the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
[27]*The Mistaken J*, 11.
[28]Ibid.
[29]Ibid.
[30]Ibid.
[31]Ibid., 11.
[32]David Bivin, *Ministries Today*, Jan/Feb 1989, 26.
[33]*The Mistaken J*, 11.
[34]"Was the New Testament Originally Greek?" (Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1992), 2-3.
[35]Ibid., 3.

[36]John P. Juedes, "George M. Lamsa: Christian Scholar or Cultic Torchbearer?" (*Christian Research Journal*, Fall 1989, Volume 12 Number 2).
[37]Ibid.
[38]"Was the New Testament Originally Greek?", 3.
[39]The content of the previous three paragraphs follows Juedes.
[40]Juedes.
[41]Carson, Moo, Morris, 68-69.
[42]"Was the New Testament Originally Greek?", 4.
[43]Ibid., 6-9.
[44]Juedes.
[45]"Was the New Testament Originally Greek?" 9.
[46]*The Mistaken J*, 12.
[47]Ibid.
[48]Ibid.
[49]Ibid., 13.
[50]Ibid., 13-14.
[51]Ibid., 14.
[52]Ibid.
[53]Seow, 11, 37.
[54]*The Mistaken J*, 14-15.
[55]Ibid., 15.
[56]"Was the New Testament Originally English?", 4.
[57]*The Mistaken J*, 15.
[58]Ibid.
[59]Ibid.
[60]Ibid., 18.

[61]Ibid., 19-20.
[62]Ibid., 20.
[63]Ibid.
[64]Ibid.
[65]Ibid.
[66]Ibid.
[67]Ibid.
[68]Ibid.
[69]Ibid.
[70]See any article on the Semitic languages in any reputable encyclopedia. The Hebrew is simply a Semitic language of which there are four other main branches, including Arabic, Aramaic, Akkadian and Ethiopic (Mansoor, 6). Hebrew is closely related to Canaanite, Moabite, Phoenician and Ugaritic, and is called in the Bible the "language of Canaan" (Isaiah 19:18). (See Mansoor, 8.)
[71]See Appendix 1 for an explanation as to the impossibility of any connection between "Jesus" and "Zeus."
[72]*The Mistaken J*, 22.
[73]Ibid., 26.
[74]*Webster's Dictionary*, Facsimile First Edition (Anaheim, CA: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1967), s.v. "God."
[75]*The Mistaken J*, 28.
[76]Ibid., 30.
[77]Ibid.
[78]Ibid., 31.

[79]Ibid., 33.
[80]Ibid., 35.
[81]Ibid.
[82]Monsoor, 23.
[83]See *The Mistaken J*, 28.

Appendix 1

The letter following was written to a pastor in response to the YNCA tract, "How the Savior's Name Was Changed."[1]

Dear Pastor:

Thank you for the copy of the pamphlet, "How the Savior's Name Was Changed." It is an example of a rash of apparently recent works which confuse people by skirting the significance of the inspiration of the original manuscripts of the New Testament in the Greek language rather than Hebrew and by repudiating the legitimate development of the English language. Those who write pamphlets such as these give a show of scholarship but reveal their lack of knowledge of the biblical languages by their mistaken conclusions.

Jesus commanded His disciples to go into all the world and to preach the gospel to all nations (Matthew 28:19). Inherent in this command is the requirement to translate the gospel into every language of the world. There is no suggestion anywhere in Scripture that before the gospel can be preached the nations of the world must learn the Hebrew or any other language so as to be sure to pronounce every word as it was pronounced in ancient Hebrew. Knowledge of Hebrew and Greek is very valuable in understanding Scripture, but it is never a requirement

for the declaration of the gospel. Instead, the gospel is to be translated into the languages of the world. This work of translation began about 150 A.D. with the translation of the New Testament into Syriac, and it has continued into many languages since then.

The truth is, no one can be quite certain that the pronunciation of Hebrew today is identical to that of ancient Hebrew. For many centuries, Hebrew was for all practical purposes a dead language. It was revived only in this century in conjunction with the establishment of the nation of Israel.[2] Indeed, the Hebrew letters in use today are not, strictly speaking, Hebrew. Instead, they represent the Aramaic script from the third or second centuries B.C.[3]

The pamphlet begins with an error in the first sentence, when it claims that Mary was "a Jewish virgin who spoke Hebrew." The truth is that from the time of the Babylonian exile in 586 B.C. through the first century A.D., Hebrew was no longer the dominant language among the Jewish people. It was replaced by Aramaic, which was the language Jesus spoke.[4] During this time, Hebrew was a language in use only by the learned scholars. It is doubtful that we should place Mary, a teenage girl, in this company. Young Jewish girls in the first century were not exposed to an educational system designed to teach them the Hebrew language.

Since we know for a fact that Jesus Himself spoke the Aramaic language (e.g., Mark 5:41; 7:34), it is cer-

tain His mother did the same. The pamphlet's parenthetical admission that perhaps Mary spoke Aramaic is about the closest the pamphlet comes to the truth.

The second major error occurs in the second sentence, with the statement that Jesus was born into a society where "Hebrew was the common language." As we have noted above, this is not true. The common language was Aramaic; Hebrew was the property of the small scholarly community.

The third major error occurs in the first sentence of the second paragraph with the claim that "whenever people were spoken to from On High, it was always to those who were familiar with or spoke the Hebrew language." At the earliest, Hebrew began to be spoken around 1500-1400 B.C.[5] The claim of the pamphlet would mean that God spoke to no one prior to 1500 B.C., which is patently false. The absurdity of this is also seen in such instances as the angel of God speaking to Cornelius in Acts 10. Cornelius no doubt spoke both Italian (Acts 10:1) and Greek, the common language of the Roman empire, but to claim that this Roman military man spoke the language of a few Hebrew scholars of the day is beyond belief. The fact is that whenever God has spoken to people, He has spoken to them in a language they could understand, whatever that may have been. God knows all languages.

The fourth error occurs in the second sentence of the second paragraph, with the claim "Hebrew no doubt was

spoken in the Garden of Eden." There's not a Hebrew scholar in the world who believes this. There is absolutely no evidence for it. The earliest written examples of ancient Hebrew (remember that our current Hebrew letters are from the Aramaic; they are not the same as the ancient letters) are found on the famous Moabite stone which dates from the ninth century B.C. and on the inscription discovered in the Pool of Siloam from about the eighth century B.C.[6] If ancient Hebrew was spoken in the Garden of Eden, it seems strange that archeology has uncovered no example of it in writing until less than 1,000 years before the time of Christ.

The third sentence in the second paragraph contains a half-truth when it says, "The Bible is a Hebrew book." It is true that most of the Old Testament is written in Hebrew, but portions of the books of Daniel and Ezra and a verse in Jeremiah are written in Aramaic. Then, of course, there is the New Testament, which is as much part of the Bible as the Old Testament, and it was originally written in Greek, not Hebrew, as the pamphlet seems to suggest. There is absolutely no evidence that any New Testament book, including Matthew, was originally written in Hebrew. Every manuscript in existence, some of which go back at least to the second century, and perhaps even to the late first century, is written in Greek.

The next error occurs in the fourth sentence of the second paragraph with the statement, "The only language spoken for the first 1757 years until the Tower of Babel

incident was Hebrew." There is no linguistic evidence that this is true. The claim that the tribes of Shem did not join the project at the plains of Shinar contradicts the plain statement of Genesis 11:1 that "the whole earth had one language and one speech." We don't know what language was spoken prior to the Tower of Babel, but Hebrew was one of the Semitic languages resulting from the confusion of tongues, which is why—though it is a distinct language—it has much in common with the other Semitic languages, as we have previously noted.

The statement in the last sentence of the second paragraph that "Hebrew is the heavenly language" is simply a baseless assertion. The statement in the last sentence of the third paragraph that the "Hebrew language was not changed" at the Tower of Babel is also untrue. First, the Hebrew language was not spoken prior to this event. Secondly, Scripture declares that at Babel, "the Lord confused the language of *all* the earth," and this certainly includes whatever language was being spoken by Shem's descendants (Genesis 11:9).

The fourth paragraph asks why our Bibles call the Savior by a name which is neither Jewish nor Hebrew and claims that "Jesus has no translation in any language." The truth is that the name "Jesus" is simply the English transliteration--following the rules of the development of the English language--of the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew name "Joshua" or "Yeshua'." Keep in mind that the name *Iesous* (a letter by letter transliteration from

Greek into English) was written by every New Testament writer as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The fifth paragraph again falsely claims that Mary's "native tongue was Hebrew." A straw man is set up and knocked down as the author rejects the idea that Mary gave "her newborn a hybrid Latin-Greek name that carries no such meaning as Savior in either language." This is completely false. The name as it is written in our Greek New Testament was inspired by the Holy Spirit, though Gabriel no doubt spoke to Mary in Aramaic. The statement that "the Greek word for savior is 'soter,' while the Latin is 'salvare'" is completely irrelevant. As noted above, *Iesous* is transliterated from the Hebrew *Yeshua'*, which means "Jehovah-Savior" or "Jehovah will save" or "Jehovah is salvation." The *Ie* is the direct transliteration of the *Ye*, which is the abbreviation for *Yahweh*. The *sous* is the direct transliteration of *shua*, following the rules of the Greek language, which is a form of the Hebrew *yasha'*, meaning "salvation."

Contrary to the sixth paragraph, Jesus *is* the name of the Messiah, as it is transliterated into modern English. Of course His name was never pronounced "Jesus" as in modern English during His life on earth. Today's English language did not exist then!

It is true that there is no letter in the Hebrew or Greek alphabets with a sound equivalent to the modern English "J." This is a major contributing factor to the confusion in the minds of those who reject the possibility that the

Messiah's name could be spoken in *any* language of the world. The current pronunciation of the English "J" is due to the influence of the French language on the development of the English language during the seventeenth century. If you look at an original King James Version, as printed in 1611 or thereabouts, you will see that the name is written "Iesous." Typesetters began to add a tail onto an initial "I," making it look like our modern "J." Then, as the language developed, when this "I with a tail" was the first letter in a word, it began to be pronounced like our modern "J." To deny that this is acceptable is to deny the validity of the development of language and to suggest that there are some languages in the world in which the Messiah's name cannot be accurately spoken.

As far as I am concerned, a person can pronounce the Messiah's name according to any language in the world and it is perfectly acceptable. (The writers of this pamphlet, by the way, are not pronouncing it correctly as far as Hebrew is concerned.) But to repudiate our modern "J," one should be consistent and delete it completely from his vocabulary. Otherwise, he is admitting the "J" is legitimate for all aspects of the language except the gospel! To be consistent, a person should pronounce every "J" as a "Y." I notice that the authors of the pamphlet violate their own convictions in the first sentence, when they write, "The Savior was born in Bethlehem of *J*udea of a *J*ewish virgin."

In the eighth paragraph, the pamphlet asks, "What was the Savior's name before there was a letter 'j'?" This is an irrelevant question. The Savior's name is what it has always been. The development of the English "I" into our current "J" did nothing to change the Savior's name. If we are speakers of Hebrew, we will say, "Yeshua'." If we are speakers of Greek, we will say, "Iesous." If we are speakers of Spanish, we will say, "Jesus," but pronounce the initial letter like an "H." If we are Russian, we will pronounce the name something like "Esus." If we speak English, we will pronounce it, "Jesus." Each pronunciation, and many, many more in other languages of the world, is legitimate, and none of them change the Savior's name. What we are talking about here is *pronunciation*, not the meaning of the name itself. The significance of names in the Bible is in what they meant. No matter how a name is pronounced, if it means the same thing as it meant in Scripture, it is the same name.

The ninth paragraph suggests that Jesus' disciples spoke Hebrew. When, then, did Jesus speak Aramaic? The truth is, they definitely spoke Aramaic. Then, there is the assertion that "their Hebrew speech was then translated into Greek by linguists who gave us the record in our Bibles." This completely ignores the fact that the original New Testament manuscripts were written in Greek. This was not a matter of "linguists" translating Hebrew speech; this was a matter of the Holy Spirit in-

spiring the original authors to write in the Greek language.

The invitation in the ninth paragraph to write for a study titled "Was the New Testament Written in Greek?" causes me to be suspicious that the authors of this pamphlet claim that the New Testament was original written in Hebrew. I would be very surprised if they do not claim this. But if they do, their claim is completely without foundation. The burden of proof is completely on their shoulders. Over 5,300 manuscripts of the New Testament are currently known; every one of them is in Greek. There is not one ancient New Testament manuscript in Hebrew. Let them produce a Hebrew New Testament before making such a claim.

In the tenth paragraph, the pamphlet first asserts the author's idea that the Messiah's Hebrew name was "Yahshua." Actually, we could stop at this point, for this assertion reveals that the author is ignorant of biblical Hebrew. The actual transliteration is not "Yahshua," but "Yeshua'." The vowel marking "tsere" is represented in English by "e," not by "a." "A" is used to represent the "patach" or "qamets," which have a completely different sound than "tsere." Also, there is no equivalent to the English "H" in the Hebrew version of the Messiah's name. "Yahshua" is a fictional name which does not appear anywhere in the Greek or Hebrew Scriptures. I suppose the author of the pamphlet is trying to hook together the Hebrew abbreviation for Yahweh, which looks

like "JAH" in the KJV translation of Psalm 68:4; it is transliterated "YAH" in the NKJV, and the legitimate latter part of the name. The faulty transliteration "Yahshua" reveals that the author does not know the Hebrew language and that his claims in this pamphlet thus cannot be trusted.

I believe I can assure you that the writer of this pamphlet not only mispronounces the first portion of Messiah's name (he says "Yah" instead of "Ye"), and it id doubtful that he pronounces the last portion of the name correctly. Actually, in Hebrew, *Yeshua'* ends with the letter ayin, which is virtually unpronounceable by English speakers today. In fact, many Hebrew speakers in modern Israel cannot pronounce it correctly. It consists of a guttural produced by constricting the lower throat muscles and retracting the tongue root. It has been referred to as the sound of "incipient vomiting." There is no equivalent in English or any other Indo-European language. To be consistent, if the writer of this pamphlet is so concerned to pronounce the Messiah's name as it was originally pronounced in Hebrew, he must be concerned about more than the initial letter.

In the seventeenth paragraph, which appears on page 3, the pamphlet takes away the authority of your New Testament by falsely claiming that "it is obvious that scribes went through the King James Bible and everywhere changed the true name of Yahshua to Jesus." First, no scribes were involved in producing the King James

Version. Ancient scribes were involved in making copies of ancient manuscripts. The KJV is a translation done by seventeenth century English scholars, not by scribes. Second, the statement quoted above makes no sense and is without foundation. There is not a Greek manuscript of the New Testament anywhere in the world that has the invented "Yahshua" anywhere in it. Remember, "Yahshua" is not a word! But, on the other hand, neither is there a Greek manuscript in existence which has the legitimate "Yeshua'" in it, for "Yeshua'" is Hebrew, and no New Testament manuscript written in Greek has any Hebrew in it. Every New Testament manuscript in existence has the Greek *Iesous* throughout.

Toward the bottom of page 4, the claim appears that the Israelite priests began to "conceal" the four letters of the Tetragrammaton (YHWH). This is completely false. The Tetragrammaton appears many times throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. On page 5, the author of the pamphlet reveals his ignorance as to why the Jewish scribes--beginning in about the sixth century A.D.--inserted the vowel markings for *Adonai* into *YHWH*. It was not, as erroneously suggested, so they would read "Yeh," whatever that would mean, but so they would make no effort to pronounce the name at all. Instead, the vowel markings were there to remind them to say "Adonai" when they came to the Tetragram.

On the remainder of page 5, the author alleges that early Christian translators lifted the Hebrew names di-

rectly out of the Septuagint with no consideration for the fact that they were Hebrew names. The truth is that the Septuagint, which was a Greek translation from the Hebrew Scriptures done around 250 A.D., was the translation in common use during the first century in Palestine. Jesus Himself quoted from it, as did many New Testament writers. The Book of Hebrews uses the Septuagint almost exclusively. Remember, these New Testament writers were inspired by the Holy Spirit to do what they did.

On page 6, the author fogs up the facts with a discussion of *Yahweh* and how the first three letters are pronounced. He makes a great deal out of the fact that it is *Yah* and not *Yeh*. This is completely beside the point. The Hebrew version of the Messiah's name is *Yeshua'*, not *Yahshua*.

A great deal more of the pamphlet is erroneous, but there seems to be no need to deal with every error. Perhaps my final response will point out the error on page 8, which claims that in Ephesians 3:15 Paul said that the entire family of Yahweh will be called by the precious name of "Yah." The truth is that "Yah" appears nowhere in Ephesians 3:15; for that matter, it appears nowhere in the New Testament.

It seems obvious that the writer of this pamphlet rejects the inspired Greek New Testament. He also invents a word which appears nowhere in the Hebrew language: "Yahshua."

The claims of this pamphlet must be rejected. We are English-speaking people, and the Messiah's name in our language is "Jesus." If we spoke another language, we would pronounce His name according to that language. But the important thing is not how you pronounce His name (although it must be a legitimate language and not something invented as in this pamphlet), but that you have faith in Him and obey His gospel.

This pamphlet is literally "much ado about nothing," and it serves to distract people from inspired Scripture itself.

Sincerely,

Daniel L. Segraves

Notes

[1]In preparation for publication, editorial work has been done on this letter.
[2]See Menahem Mansoor, *Biblical Hebrew Step by Step*, Vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), 9.
[3]Ibid., 27.
[4]Ibid., 8-10.
[5]See any article on the Semitic languages in any reputable encyclopedia. The Hebrew is simply a Semitic language of which there are four other main branches, including Arabic, Aramaic, Akkadian and Ethiopic (Mansoor, 6). Hebrew is closely related to Canaanite, Moabite, Phoenician and Ugaritic, and is called in the Bible the "language of Canaan" (Isaiah 19:18). (See Mansoor, 8.)
[6]Monsoor, 23.

Appendix 2

The following letter was written in response to an inquiry concerning an allegation that *Yeshua'* is an acronym for the words "May His name and memory be blotted out."[1]

Dear Sir:

Yeshua' is actually the name as it appears in the inspired Hebrew Scriptures beginning in the post-exilic literature. It is the shortened form of the pre-exilic *Yehoshua'*. Both mean the same thing: Yahweh will save. The reason for the shortened form is simply due to developments in the Hebrew language with the passing of time, just as all languages develop.

Yeshua' is not an acronym for "May his name and memory be blotted out." The name "*Yeshua'*" is composed of the consonants yod, shin, ayin. When the vowel points are included, it consists of yod, tsere, shin, shureq, patach, ayin. The people who put forth this false teaching are grasping at straws. They seem to keep forgetting that the final letter of *Yeshua'* is the ayin, which—though it is very difficult to pronounce—is a consonant which cannot be overlooked. (In transliteration, the ayin looks like a backward apostrophe.) The first letters of the three words forming the sentence "May his name and memory be blotted out" are yod, shin, waw. This is not the same

thing at all as yod, shin, ayin. They may think that the shureq in the Messiah's name is a waw, because the shureq is formed from the waw with a dot after it. But when the waw is used this way, it is a matres lectionis (mother of reading, an early vowel marker before the dots and dashes of the Masoretic system were developed) which serves as a vowel, not a consonant. Even if we let the shureq represent the waw—which it does not—*Yeshua'* would still not be an acronym for "May his name and memory be blotted out," for the final ayin is still not accounted for.

These people apparently do not know the Hebrew language, and they are resorting to superstition (like the Jewish Kabbalists who distort the Scriptures into occultic literature by finding hidden meanings in numerical equivalents of letters, acronyms, etc.). Paul warned us to pay no heed to Jewish fables.

Remember, those who teach this doctrine reject not only the inspired New Testament, but also the Hebrew text wherever it does not agree with their ideas. *Yeshua'* is in the Hebrew text. The Greek *Iesous* is a direct transliteration from it, just as Jesus is a direct transliteration from the inspired Greek. The "word" "YAH SHUA" appears nowhere in any Hebrew manuscript on earth. It is not a word. It does not mean "Yahweh will save." "*YAH*" alone is a shortened form of Yahweh, but it is an independent form or final form, and never appears at the beginning of a word. "Shua" alone means nothing. It is

missing the final ayin. These people may think it means "salvation," but that is like saying "loo" means the same thing as "look." Even with the final ayin, "*shua'*" cannot stand alone as an inflection of "*yasha'*," which is the word meaning "salvation" and from which the Messiah's name is formed together with the yod prefix which is the shortest abbreviation for "Yahweh."

The proponents of this teaching may think that the occasions in the Hebrew Scriptures where the word "*shua'*" stands alone are examples of the inflection of "*yasha'*" as found in *Yeshua'*. If so, they are wrong. The word "*shua'*" alone is a different word which means something like "cry." This is something like the fact that in the English language we have two words which mean different things, but both of which are spelled the same. An example is "bass."

The Tetragram in the Hebrew Scriptures never divides the name of God as YAH WEH or YAH VEH. This is completely wrong. What these people are doing is at least dangerously close to adding to or taking away from the Holy Scriptures. We must pray that God will open the eyes of their understanding. When people start down a road like this, the errors tend to become increasingly perverse.

Note

[1]Minor editorial work has been done to prepare this letter for publication.

Other Books by Daniel L. Segraves

Proverbs: Ancient Wisdom for Today's World
Living By Faith: A Verse-by-Verse Study of Romans
Themes From a Letter to Rome
Hebrews: Better Things, Volume 1
Hebrews: Better Things, Volume 2
James: Faith at Work
I Peter: Standing Fast in the Grace of God
II Peter and Jude
You Can Understand the Bible: Guidelines for Interpreting Scripture
Hair Length in the Bible
Signs and Wonders: A Guide to Understanding the Supernatural

By Daniel and Judy Segraves

Marriage: Back to Bible Basics

By Judy Segraves

The Marriage-Go-Round
Been There Done That
65 Short Stories: A Collection for Enjoyment, Encouragement, and Enrichment

"...thou shalt call His name **JESUS:** for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

In *The Messiah's Name: Jesus, Not Yahshua,* Daniel L. Segraves carefully examines and refutes the teaching that the Messiah's name in modern English is not "Jesus" and that the New Testament was not originally written in Greek. He demonstrates the impossibility of the pronunciation "Yahshua" and shows why the name of the Messiah in the Hebrew language is *"Yeshua"* and in the Greek *"Iesous."*

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